

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss facts and fiction. Recently, FOX News reporter Peter Doocy asked White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki about a Biden administration official's claim that Republicans have defunded the police by not voting to pass Biden's wasteful \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill. Ms. Psaki doubled down on the idea that it is Republicans and not Democrats who want to defund the police.

When a White House Press Secretary gives a press briefing, you expect some spin. You expect some verbal bobbing and weaving if the topic is unflattering to the administration. But when Jen Psaki tried to blame Republicans for defunding the police, it wasn't spin. It was horse manure. It was gaslighting.

For over a year, Democrats and left-wing activists have been calling over and over and over again to defund the police. And many Democrat-led city councils and Democrat mayors have done so, cutting and even slashing police budgets. As a result of those reckless policies, we are seeing a deeply concerning wave of violent crime in American cities across the country.

The chief White House spokesperson blaming Republicans for defunding the police is like an arsonist showing up at the fire and blaming the firemen. It is like the Chinese Communist Party blaming America for the Wuhan virus. It is like OJ saying he is going to help find the real killer. It is absurd. It is ridiculous. And Democrats know it.

Let's look at the facts. Democrats have called explicitly to defund the police for over a year and have been successful in doing it. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Democrat, last summer pledged to cut the NYPD budget by \$1 billion, and then he did so. New York City passed a budget that did indeed cut \$1 billion from the police department.

Just a couple of months ago, de Blasio was forced to backtrack. He realized what a terrible decision it had been because now he is working to reverse it.

AOC, the darling of the extreme left-wing, has said: "Defunding [the] police means defunding [the] police" and "The fight to defund [the police] continues." There is not a lot of ambiguity in what AOC is saying.

And she is not alone. How about Representative RASHIDA TLAIB. She has called for "no more policing." Stop and think about that for a minute. This is an elected Democratic Member of Congress whose policy objective is no more policing. Those are her own words.

How about Representative ILHAN OMAR. She has said: "You can't really reform a department that is rotten to the root." An elected Democratic Member of Congress describing police departments as "rotten to the root." Again, those are her words.

And then there is Representative AYANNA PRESSLEY, who has introduced legislation to defund police officers in public schools. And she has said that defunding the police is about "true reparations." Well, maybe this is just a few fringe Democrats in the House of Representatives. Maybe it is not a broader policy of the Democratic Party.

What about Joe Biden? Uncle Joe can't possibly support defunding the police, right? Well, if you thought so, you would be wrong because Joe Biden nominated two of the leading advocates of abolishing the police—Vanita Gupta and Kristen Clarke—to senior positions at the U.S. Department of Justice. One of them is the No. 3 official at the Department of Justice. The other is the head of civil rights at the Department of Justice. Both had written, as recently as last year, explicit calls for defunding the police, and they got rewarded with helping run the Department of Justice.

But surely, you might say, even if Joe Biden gave in to the activists and nominated these folks, there are Democrats in this Chamber who would say defunding the police is too much; let's not go that far. Well, if you would say that, you would be wrong because both of those nominees, two of the leading advocates for defunding the police, were confirmed when every single Democrat in this Chamber voted to confirm them—100 percent.

The next time you see a Democrat describing themselves as moderate, reasonable, not one of those crazies saying things like "defund the police," maybe you should ask them why they voted to confirm two of the leading advocates for defunding the police to senior positions at the Department of Justice.

Democrat-led city councils all over the country are following the same game plan, and they have voted over and over and over again to defund the police. Last year, the Los Angeles City Council cut the police budget by \$150 million. Portland cut \$15 million from its police budget. Minneapolis cut \$8 million from its police budget. Seattle cut its police budget by 18 percent.

Now, what do these city have in common? They are run by Democrats. It is Democratic politicians who are slashing police budgets. And what have the results been? Well, sadly, these Democrat-led cities are reaping what they sowed. Crime rates are skyrocketing. The New York Times—hardly a right-wing outfit—the New York Times has reported that homicides in Los Angeles increased 36 percent, that homicides have increased in Portland more than 82 percent, and that homicides in Minneapolis increased nearly 72 percent last year. By all appearances, these homicide spikes will continue throughout this year.

Just a few weeks ago, Democrats demonstrated that they couldn't learn from the tragic failure of other cities that had slashed the police and seen

homicides skyrocket. What did they do in Oakland, CA? The city council voted to cut over \$18 million from the police department, and Oakland has already seen a 90-percent increase in homicides over last year.

The New York Times has also reported data showing that in 2020, homicide rates increased more than 30 percent in big cities. So far, they are increasing again this year.

According to the Guardian, some preliminary data showed that there were 4,000 more murders in 2020 than there were in 2019—4,000 men, women, and children who would be living, breathing, living their lives, raising their kids, contributing to the diverse tapestry of our Nation if it were not for the radicals slashing police budgets because of extreme ideological commitments and unleashing these crimewaves.

Now, Democrats know that the politics and the policy of defunding the police aren't working for them, which is why they are desperately trying to backtrack and blame and gaslight Republicans. Yeah, yeah, it is the Republicans who are doing this. Sure, sure, that is the ticket.

Not only did some Democrats blame calls to defund the police for close races that they lost in November and for the razor-thin Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate, they also know it isn't popular with the American people. A recent USA TODAY poll found that only 18 percent of Americans support defunding the police, and a large majority of African Americans don't support defunding the police. The same is true for Democratic voters. A large majority of Democratic voters don't support defunding the police. But in defiance of the interests of their constituents, Democrats continue to go down that road. The facts are that Democrats have repeatedly called to defund the police, and they have done so—this isn't a theory—they have done so in many cities.

Crime is rising, and radical Democratic policies have had deadly consequences. Not only have homicides risen, but there were more law enforcement officer fatalities in 2020 than there had been in 46 years. In 2020, 264 law enforcement officers tragically died in the line of duty, some from COVID-19 as a result of being first responders and others from getting shot while on duty.

After Jen Psaki blamed Republicans for defunding the police, Peter Doocy asked her to name the Republicans who said they were voting against the American Rescue Plan—the massive leftwing spending plan—that had nothing to do with the police. It was shoveling a lot of money to liberal special interests. It was giving money to State and local governments. So the White House argument was, well, some of the money to State and local governments could theoretically have gone to police, so therefore, if you don't vote for the massive trillions of dollars in spending,